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TOR: 202356Z NOV 81

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DE RUESJO #7563 3242255
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7255
RUCLFDA/COGARDSEVEN MIAMI FL NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO RULPALJ/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN//SCDC/SCJ3/SCJ5/JDC IMMEDIATE
RUEBBGA/CCCJTF KEY WEST FL IMMEDIATE
RULPAFA/USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN/DO IMMEDIATE
RUWJNJA/EPIC EL PASO TX IMMEDIATE
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAN JOSE 7563

EPIC PLEASE PASS TO AFT AND USC

E.O.: 12065: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PMMC, SNAR, CS
SUBJ: POSSIBLE ARMS SMUGGLING

1. A GREEN COASTAL CARGO SHIP THE "MAR CARIBE" (A 200 TO 235 TON 123 FEET IN LENGTH CONVERTED NAVY YT) FLYING A COSTA RICAN FLAG IS LOCATED NEAR THE PORT OF LIMON. SHIP'S CAPTAIN IS DEREK LEE, A BRITISH SUBJECT. LEE IS DESCRIBED BY ONE SOURCE AS A "GUN-RUNNER." SHIP HAS A PAINTED FALSE WATER-LINE AND IS STILL LOADED WITH UNKNOWN CARGO. ACTIVITY ON BOARD OBSERVED LOCAL TIME 1530 HRS. THIS COULD BE VESSEL MENTIONED IN HOUSTON PRESS REPORT ON ARRESTS BY US CUSTOMS.

2. EMBASSY WILL CONTACT PUBLIC SECURITY MINISTER ARNULFO CARMONA TO MOBILIZE HIS RESOURCES TO PREVENT ANY OFF-

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LOADING OF CARGO. IF VESSEL STILL IN PLACE 21 NOVEMBER, EMBASSY MAY REQUEST GOCR APPROVAL FOR USCG TO ENTER COSTA RICAN TERRITORIAL WATERS.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST USCG TO INTERCEPT "MAR CARIBE" SHOULD IT DEPART FOR HIGH SEAS.

4. DEA COSTA RICA IS PLACING VESSEL ON LOOK-OUT, OPERATION TIBURON. SINCE IF IT IS NOT THE GUNRUNNER REPORTED IN HOUSTON PRESS, IT COULD BE A MARIJUANA "MOTHER SHIP."
MCNEIL

END OF MESSAGE

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TO RUESJO/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE 7186
INFO RUCLFOA/COGUARD SEVEN MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RULPALJ/USCINCSO GUARRY HTS PN/SCOC/SCJ3/SCJ5/JUC IMMEDIATE
RUEBRGA/CCCJTF KEY *EST FL IMMEDIATE
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BT
UNCLAS STATE 309378

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PHMC, SNAR, CS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ARMS SMUGGLING

REF: (A) SAN JOSE 7563

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, US COAST GUARD ADVISES THAT NEAREST CUTTER TO COSTA RICA AT PRESENT IS APPROXIMATELY 600 MILES DISTANT. RAPID INTERVENTION BY THE COAST GUARD IS THEREFORE NOT POSSIBLE. IN ANY CASE, DEPARTMENT IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE THOUGHT OF THE US COAST GUARD UNDERTAKING AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION *ITHIN THE TERRITORIAL SEAS OF ANOTHER SOVEREIGN STATE AGAINST A VESSEL NOT LEGITIMATELY REGISTERED IN THE US - EVEN *ITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THAT STATE. DEPARTMENT FEELS THAT SUCH ACTIONS ARE SOLEY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER THOSE *ATERS. SHOULD THE VESSEL FLEE COSTA RICAN JURISDICTION, THE COAST GUARD *OULD BE FREER TO ASSIST

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ONCE THE VESSEL IS ON THE HIGH SEAS. IF THE VESSEL IS LEGITIMATELY OF COSTA RICAN REGISTRY, THE US COAST GUARD COULD BOARD, SEARCH, AND SEIZE THE VESSEL ON BEHALF OF THE GOCR SHOULD THEY REQUEST THIS ASSISTANCE. IF THE VESSEL IS NOT LEGITIMATELY OF COSTA RICAN REGISTRY, THE FACT THAT IT IS FLYING A COSTA RICAN FLAG AND GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF COSTA RICAN REGISTRY, MAY QUALIFY THE VESSEL AS STATELESS,

WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE COAST GUARD TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION UNDER ITS OWN AUTHORITY. CONSIDERING THE DISTANCES INVOLVED HOWEVER, IT IS UNCERTAIN AT THIS POINT WHETHER A CUTTER COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO INTERCEPT EVEN IF THE SHIP LEAVES FOR THE HIGH SEAS.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST POST APPROACH THE GOCR AND BRIEF THEM ON THIS CASE, STATING THAT THE USG HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THERE MAY BE A CARGO OF WEAPONS OR OTHER CONTRABAND ABOARD THE MAR CARIBE. ENCOURAGE THE GOCR TO INVESTIGATE AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION, STRESSING THE FACT THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A CUTTER COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST DUE TO THE DISTANCES INVOLVED. ALSO REQUEST THAT THE GOCR CHECK ITS REGISTRY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE IF THE M/V MAR CARIBE IS LEGITIMATELY REGISTERED UNDER THE LAWS OF COSTA RICA. PLEASE REPORT THE RESULTS OF THIS REGISTRY CHECK TO DEPARTMENT (OPERATIONS CENTER) BY TELEPHONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF THE MAR CARIBE FLEES COSTA RICAN JURISDICTION, NOTIFY DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY.
HAIG

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TO RUFHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7256
RU#JNJA/EPIC EL PASO TX NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO RUCLFOA/COGUARD SEVEN MIAMI FL
RUEBRGA/CCCJTF KEY WEST FL IMMEDIATE
RUEHJP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 7081
RULPAIJ/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN//SCJ2/SCDC/SCJ3/SCJ5/JOC//IMMEDIATE
RUESTE/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE 5583
RUEABND/DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RULPAFA/USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN/DO IMMEDIATE
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L

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-EPIC FOR: MIU/TIBURON

DEA FOR: FRL

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PHMC, SNAR, CS
SUBJ: POSSIBLE ARMS SMUGGLING

REF: A) SAN JOSE 7563 (DTG 202248Z NOV 81)
B) SECSTATE WASHDC 309378
C) COGUARD I.D EPIC EL PASO TX N03840

1. FOLLOWING UPDATE TO REF A IS PROVIDED.

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2. WE ARE NOW POTENTIALLY CONCERNED WITH THREE VESSSELS - RUNDOWN ON EACH FOLLOWS:

A. "CARIB UNO" - THIS SMALL (APPROXIMATELY 130 FOOT) EX-U.S. NAVY SHIPYARD TANKER IS NOW BROKEN DOWN IN LIMON HARBOR. IT WAS ORIGINALLY CONFUSED WITH "MAR CARIB" BY A SOURCE IN LIMON. "CARIB UNO" WILL TAKE TWO WEEKS TO REPAIR. AND MAY NOT BE INVOLVED IN ANYTHING BUT ITS STATED CARGO OF VEGETABLE OIL. VESSEL SAID TO FLY PANAMANIAN FLAG.

B. "MAR CARIB" - ROLL/ROLLOFF VESSEL (EST 350 FEET) OWNED BY CONSOLIDATED CARIB TRANSPORT CO. (A U.S. FIRM). VESSEL SAID TO BE REGISTERED IN CAYMEN ISLAND. REPORTED TO CARRY GENERAL CARGO - SAID TO HAVE LEFT PORT OF LIMON AT ABOUT 200800Z NOV 81. EN ROUTE TO MIAMI VIA PTO. CORTEZ, HONDURAS. EST MIAMI PM 22 NOV. SHIP SHOULD NOW BE WELL CLEAR OF COSTA RICAN WATERS. SHIP HAS RECORD OF DRUG INVOLVEMENT AND WAS ONE SUSPECTED (PER EPIC) OF INVOLVEMENT IN ARMS SMUGGLING.

C. "GLORIA" - 200 FT. FREIGHTER SAID TO BE FLYING CYPRIOT FLAG. USCG AND ATF INFO INDICATING VESSEL EN ROUTE TO TEXAS VIA PORT OF LIMON. PERIPIC THERE IS QUOTE DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE UNQUOTE INDICATING 330 TONS OF ARMS AND MUNITIONS ABOARD. DUE INTO LIMON ON 25 NOV. 81. VESSEL IS ON LOOKOUT WITH EPIC. EPIC INFO APPARENTLY FROM HQ COGUARD, WASH. D.C. THIS MAY BE OUR VESSEL, IF IT INDEED EXISTS. REQUEST ADDRESSEES PROVIDE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

3. ACTION REQUESTED IN PARA 2 REF B ACCOMPLISHED. POLOFF BRIEFED DEP. DIR. OF COSTA RICAN CIVIL GUARD AND REQUESTED THAT GLORIA BE BOARDED AND SEARCHED WHEN SHE REACHES LIMON. BOTH MAR CARIB AND GLORIA HAVE BEEN PUT ON EPIC WATCH LIST.
MCNEIL

END OF MESSAGE

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